

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF DAWSON COUNTY**

March 16, 2007

RE: HB 677

Dear Supporters,

We are writing in support of HB 677.

Since its inception in 2005, the Boys & Girls Club of Dawson County/Club Soda Teen Center has been serving the needs of our at-risk teens in our community. Our mission is *"To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens."* We actively seek to enrich the lives of girls and boys ages 12-19 whom other youth serving agencies have had difficulty reaching, and are dedicated to ensuring that all youth have access to quality programs and services that will enhance their lives and shape their future.

Many of our communities at-risk youth benefit from trained, caring, professional staff and volunteers who help young people take control of their lives, envision productive futures, and achieve their goals. All Club programs are designed to promote and enhance the development of adolescents by instilling in each a sense of competence, a sense of usefulness, a sense of belonging, and a sense of power or influence in the world around them.

We are at substantial risk of losing our Teen Center. If we lose this service our community's well being will suffer increased tragedies. While our long range plan is for local sustainability, at this time our community is not able to sustain this service without your help

Please help us continue to provide services for Montana's at-risk youth!

Sincerely,

**Valerie Limesand
Executive Director**

The Positive Place For Kids



Big Sky High School • C. S. Porter Middle School • Meadow Hill Middle School
 Hellgate High School • Sentinel High School
 Willard Alternative High School • Washington Middle School
 Hawthorne Elementary School • Franklin Elementary School
 Lowell Elementary School

A Program of Turning Point

1325 Wyoming St. • Missoula, MT 59801 • Phone: (406) 532-9827 • Fax: (406) 541-3032
 email: rbuzzas@wmmhc.org or check out the website at www.flagshipprogram.org

March 16, 2007
 House Appropriations Committee
 State Capitol Building, Room 102
 Helena, MT 59620

Re: Testimony on HB 677

Dear Chairman Sinrud and Members of The House Appropriations Committee,

Please accept this letter as testimony in support of HB 677, presented by Representative Elsie Arntzen. As a member of the Montana Afterschool Network and Director of The Flagship Program(an after-school program that has been operating in Missoula for the past eleven years), I have witnessed first hand the incredible need for and the positive results of providing high-quality learning and developmental opportunities for Montana's young people during the high-risk hours of after-school and summer. Our program is a good example of a community-school partnership that serves over 4,000 students per year in over 600 educational and developmental activities.

Our program has been involved in two national evaluations of quality after-school programs and the evidence is clear. Kids who are involved in after-school programs do better in school are less likely to engage in risk activities such as use of alcohol and other drugs, form stronger positive peer and adult relationships and realize opportunities that they may not have previously thought were available to them. In tracking MPNA (Montana Prevention Needs Assessment) survey results over the past six cycles, we have seen an increased attachment to school and lower rate of alcohol use by minors. It costs just over \$100 per year for a young person to participate in our program. We think that's a pretty good investment in our youth and we hope that you will agree.

My interest in this bill is that we need to make after-school programs available to more families in more communities across Montana. Funding through this proposal would allow for the development and sustainability of after-school programs across the state in communities that want to offer these services.

High quality after-school programs prevent high risk behaviors, such as underage substance use and school failure, that cost much more in terms of human and financial resources at the other end of the spectrum. Please vote yes on HB 677, so it may continue through the legislative process.

Sincerely yours,


 Rosie Buzzas, Director

Friends of Flagship Advisory Board

Dick Shull • Macrae Peebles • Don Simmons • John Engen • Molly Galusha • Bill "Moose" Petritz • Pat Simmons
 John Sommers-Flanagan • Mark Ward • Paulene Ferguson • Craig Michels • Kelly Williams, Judy Wing, Peg Shea •



P.O. Box 5021, 59403-5021

March 19, 2007

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Letter of support for House Bill 566

Dear Representatives:

This letter is in support of House Bill 566 for Capacity Building for the Care, Education and Safety for Montana's Children After School.

It is an essential service to provide after school care for Montana's children. As a provider of after school care, we see families in distress and their children suffering from a lack of adult participation in their lives. It is critical that we as a community provide the safe and drug-free environment for the children in our neighborhood. It is important to fund additional programs for our youth in Montana.

After school care helps the parents of school age children be more productive in their work lives when they know that their children are being taken care of in a safe environment.

Please support House Bill 566.

Sincerely,

James Sullivan
Director, Park and Recreation

Patty Rearden
Deputy Director, Park & Recreation

Jefferson Local Development Corporation

309 E. Legion St. • P.O. Box 1079 • Whitehall, MT 59759-1079
Phone: (406) 287-3282 • Fax: (406) 287-3287 • email: acxsm@montana.edu



March 19, 2007

Linda Tracy, Executive Director
Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network
127 E. Main St., Suite 217
Missoula, MT 59802

Dear Ms. Tracy,

I am writing to urge the Montana Legislature to continue support of Boulder's 21st Century Learning Program. Boulder's 21st Century Learning program gives children and families of Boulder extra help with academics, but it also teaches them constructive ways to spend their time such as dance, athletics and art. Boulder needs this program to provide inspiration and assistance to its children.

Boulder has no other similar after school or enrichment programs, and because of its fairly remote location, residents cannot easily partake in similar enrichment activities in other communities. The demographic make-up of Boulder includes a high financial poverty rate of 16 percent in 1999. For those under 18, the poverty rate is 20 percent in Boulder. Additional enrichment activities in the long term will help increase chances of success for Boulder's citizens.

The Jefferson Local Development Corporation works to increase jobs and tax base in Jefferson County. A solid school foundation is essential to growing and/or attracting skilled workforce and business. We see the success of the Boulder schools as critical to the economic success of the community of Boulder. The 21st Century Learning Program is an amazing bright spot for the Boulder Schools and the community of Boulder. We urge the legislature to fund this program going forward for the health and welfare of the entire community of Boulder.

Sincerely,

Tara Mastel
Tara Mastel
Manager